

interactive voice response system. Claim 19 also calls for the step of connecting both the interactive voice response system and the automatic call distribution system to a communication system of the communication network. Further, claim 19 calls for connecting at least one agent communication terminal equipment to the communication system. Claim 19 also calls for allocating the at least one agent communication terminal equipment to the automatic call distribution system. The method of claim 19 also includes influencing the interactive voice response system by the communication equipment wherein the interactive voice response system communicates a request for reserving an available one of the at least one agent communication terminal equipment to the automatic call distribution system. The claimed method includes reserving, via the automatic call distribution system, the available one of the at least one agent communication terminal equipment. Claim 19 further calls for transferring, given the request for reserving, and reservation of, the agent communication terminal equipment, the communication, equipment from the interactive voice response system to the reserved agent communication terminal equipment.

One example of Applicants' claimed invention is shown in Fig. 1. The method pertains to incorporating the functions of an automatic call distribution system (ACD) in an interactive voice response system (IRV) that is called and controlled by communication terminal equipment (KE) of a communication network. The method includes directly coupling the automatic call distribution system (ACD) and the interactive voice response system (IVR). The method also includes connecting both the interactive voice response system (IVR) and the automatic call distribution system (ACD) to a communication system (KS) of the communication network. The method also includes connecting the at least one agent communication terminal equipment (AKE) to the communication system (KS). Further, the method includes allocating the at least one agent communication terminal equipment (AKE) to the automatic call distribution system (ACD). Further, the method includes influencing the interactive voice response system (IVR) by the communication terminal equipment (KE) wherein the interactive voice response system (IVR) communicates a request for reserving an available one of the at least one agent communication terminal equipment (AKE) to the automatic call distribution system (ACD). Also included in the method is reserving, via the automatic call distribution system (ACD), the available one of the at least one agent communication terminal equipment (AKE). Further, the method includes transferring, given the request for reserving, and reservation of, the agent

communication terminal equipment (AKE), the communication terminal equipment (KE) from the interactive voice response system (IVR) to the reserved agent communication terminal equipment (AKE).

An example of Applicants' claimed invention will now be further described with reference to Fig. 1. An incoming call from a user enters the system through the communication terminal equipment (KE). The incoming call is connected from the communication terminal equipment (KE) to the interactive voice response system (IVR) by the communications system (KS). See the dotted line (1) in Fig. 1. The interactive voice response system (IVR) provides audio information to the caller via the communication terminal equipment (KE). If the caller desires information that cannot be supplied by the interactive voice response system (IVR), the communication terminal equipment (KE) influences the interactive voice response system (IVR) to request a human agent. In particular, the communication terminal equipment (KE) influences the interactive voice response system (IVR) to request an agent communication terminal equipment (AKE). Furthermore, the interactive voice recognition system (IVR) sends a request to the automatic call distribution system (ACD) to request the agent communication terminal equipment (AKE). See the step of method claim 19 of influencing the interactive voice response system (IVR) by the communication terminal equipment (KE) wherein the interactive voice response system (IVR) communicates a request for reserving an available one of the at least one agent communication terminal equipment (AKE) to the automatic call distribution system (ACD).

Conversely, McCalmont shows and describes incoming customer calls from a public network 113 directly to the automated call distributor (ACD) 110. See McCalmont, Fig. 1, and column 4, lines 31-33. The McCalmont automatic call distributor (ACD) 110 subsequently utilizes the voice response unit (VRU) 180 to obtain other caller identifier data. See McCalmont, column 4, lines 40-42. The McCalmont automatic call distributor (ACD) 110 routes the customer call to a CSR telephone (customer service representative) extension 123. See McCalmont, column 4, lines 45-49. Accordingly, nowhere does McCalmont disclose or suggest the step of influencing the voice response unit (VRU) 180 by a communication terminal equipment of the caller wherein the voice response unit (VRU) 180 communicates a request for reserving an available one of the at least one agent communication terminal equipment (CSR telephone extension 123) to the automatic call distributor (ACD) 110. In other words, the

incoming customer call in McCalmont from the public network 113 is connected directly to the automatic call distributor (ACD), 110 whereas in Applicants' invention, the incoming call from the communication terminal equipment (KE) is connected directly to the interactive voice response system (IVR). Furthermore, in Applicants' invention, the interactive voice response system (IVR) communicates a request to the automatic call distribution system (ACD) to reserve an agent, whereas the McCalmont system uses the automatic call distributor (ACD), 110 to request the agent (customer service representative).

Applicants' invention, as claimed in claim 19, further calls for transferring, given the request for reserving, and reservation of, the agent communication terminal equipment, the communication terminal equipment from the interactive voice response system to the reserved agent communication terminal equipment. In other words, Applicants' inventive method calls for transferring the call from the communication terminal equipment (KE) to the agent communication terminal equipment (AKE) through the communication system (KS). See Fig. 1 and the dotted line (4). Conversely, McCalmont uses the automatic call distributor (ACD) 110 to transfer the call to the CSR telephone extension 123. See McCalmont, column 4, lines 45-49. Nowhere does McCalmont disclose or suggest transferring the incoming call by a communication terminal equipment (KE) from an interactive voice response system (IVR) to a reserved agent communication terminal (AKE).

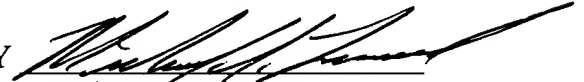
Applicants further submit that McCalmont does not disclose or suggest the claimed step of reserving an available agent communication terminal equipment (AKE) by the automatic call distributor system (ACD). See the second to last paragraph in Applicants' claim 19. Conversely, McCalmont merely cues the incoming customer call for the next available CSR telephone extension 123. See McCalmont, column 10, lines 25-27.

Applicants respectfully submit that the remaining references relied on in the Office Action do not remedy the deficiencies in McCalmont. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claimed rejections have been overcome.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: March 27, 2002